UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/58
19 January 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

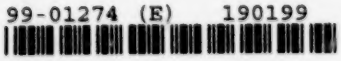
LETTER DATED 18 JANUARY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement released on 18 January 1999 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, Mr. Alexander Downer, concerning recent events in Kosovo (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the statement circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Penny WENSLEY

99-01274 (E) 190199



Annex

Statement issued on 18 January 1999 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia

Australia condemns Kosovo massacre

The Government of Australia strongly condemns the massacre on 15 January 1999 of 46 ethnic Albanian civilians in Kosovo. It is understood that the dead include at least one child and several elderly men.

These killings of ethnic Albanian citizens by Serb security forces represent a serious escalation of the conflict. The massacre follows the shooting, by unknown assailants, of two of the unarmed Kosovo Verification Mission personnel on the same day.

The Government is supportive of the work done by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and awaits the findings of its investigation with interest.

This massacre puts at risk the peaceful resolution of the Kosovo crisis, based on agreements negotiated in October under the threat of air strikes by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

It is very important that the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serb police on the one hand, and the Kosovo Liberation Army on the other, refrain from provocative actions, movements or deployments which undercut efforts to implement the agreements reached in October.

We shall continue to closely monitor this situation and we await the outcome of talks between NATO General Wesley Clark and President Milosevic.